

## Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

EB-07 /065 W

----- 113163

R 170620Z FEB 76

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2847

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0220

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IZ

SUBJ: REGIME MOVES TO STRENGTHEN ITS CONTROL

1. BAATH PARTY IN IRAQ IS CURRENTLY MAKING MAJOR EFFORTS TO CONSOLIDATE ITS POWER BASE AND EXTEND ITS CONTROL OVER ALL IRAQI GOVERNMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. FEB. 8 WAS AN IRAQI HOLIDAY MARKING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL BAATHI COUP IN 1963. FESTIVITIES INCLUDED A FOUR HOUR PARADE THROUGH DOWNTOWN BAGHDAD OF LIGHTLY ARMED UNITS OF THE BAATHI PEOPLES ARMY. PAPERS REPORTED THAT 30,000 SOLDIERS OF PEOPLES ARMY PARTICIPATED AND DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS COUNTED AT LEAST 28,000. PRESS ALSO REPORTED THAT 100,000 MEN MARCHED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF IRAQ AND QUOTED RCC MEMBER, TAHA JAZRAWI, THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE PEOPLES ARMY, AS SAYING THAT THEY ARMY WOULD MULTIPLY IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS AND THE STANDARDS OF TRAINING WOULD BE FURTHER DEVELOPED.

2. APPARENT PURPOSE OF PEOPLES ARMY IS TO IMPRESS IRAQI PUBLIC

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AND ARMED FORCES WITH EXTENT OF BAATHI CONTROL OF IRAQ AND TO

MUSTER SUPPORT FOR REGIME THROUGH POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN PARAMILITARY TYPE ORGANIZATIONS. LACK OF TRAINING OR HEAVY EQUIPMENT WOULD MAKE PEOPLES ARMY OF DUBIOUS VALUE IN EVENT OF WAR, BUT ITS SHEER SIZE MAKES IT AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN IRAQI INTERNAL POLITICS. DISPLAY OF BAATHI MUSCLE MAY HAVE BEEN TRIGGERED BY EVENTS OF LATE JANUARY AT CAMP RASHID (WHATEVER THEY WERE) AND MAY REFLECT DESIRE OF REGIME TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE TO REGULAR ARMED FORCES AS POWER CENTER IN IRAQ. PARADE MAY ALSO BE INTENDED AS SIGNAL TO IRAQ'S PROFESSIONAL MILITARY OFFICERS THAT THEY HAD BETTER ACCEPT SADDAM HUSSEIN AS THEIR APPARENT TO BKR.

3. DURING PAST WEEK, BAATH PARTY NEWSPAPER, AT-THAWRA, HAD CARRIED SERIES OF ARTICLES ATTACKING UNNAMED BUREAUCRATS FOR CORRUPTION AND FOR LACK OF SUPPORT FOR REVOLUTION. IT ALSO ATTACKED PSEUDO-BAATHIS IN GOVERNMENT FOR NOT SUPPORTING TRUE BAATHI OBJECTIVES. AT APPEARS THAT GROUND IS BEING PREPARED FOR SWEEPING PERSONNEL CHANGES IN GOI, NO DOUBT FOR PURPOSE OF EXTENDING BAATH PARTY CONTROL IN KEY GOVERNMENTAL POSITIONS AND IDENTIFYING SCAPEGOATS FOR CURRENT SUPPLY SHORTAGES.

4. WE ALSO HAVE HAD REPORTS OF NUMEROUS CHANGES IN TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL IN SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES, AND MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. PARTY MEMBERS ARE BEING MOVED INTO KEY JOBS AND SOME STUDENTS HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THEY WILL BE GIVEN FAILING GRADES IF THEY DO NOT JOIN PARTY. INDOCTRINATION LECTURES ARE BEING INCREASINGLY INCORPORATED INTO SCHOOL CURRICULA AND EVEN YOUNG CHILDREN ARE NOW SUBJECTED TO DAILY READINGS OF AT-THAWRA EDITORIALS. BAATH PARTY OBVIOUSLY CONSIDERS SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES AS IMPORTANT BREEDING GROUND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF FAITHFUL BAATHIS AND IS DEVOTING CONSIDERABLE EFFORTS TO MOLD EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM TO PRODUCE PROPERLY INDOCTRINATED PARTY MEMBERS.

4. COMMENT: DIFFICULT TO SAY HOW EFFECTIVE THESE MEASURES ARE IN WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS OF IRAQIS. MORE SOPHISTICATED ELDER GENERATION IS GENERALLY APPALLED BY HEAVY-HANDED INDOCTRINATION ATTEMPTS AND POLICE STATE METHODS. ARABS, AND PARTICULARLY IRAQIS, ARE NOTORIOUSLY INDIVIDUALISTIC AND REGIME'S ATTEMPTS TO IMPOSE AUTHORITARIAN POLITICAL STRUCTURE ARE WIDELY RESENTED. ON OTHER HAND, ARAB POLITICS HAS TRADITIONALLY INVOLVED STRONG

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ELEMENT OF OPPORTUNISM AND MESSAGE IS CERTAINLY GETTING THROUGH TO YOUNGER AGE GROUPS THAT THE WAY TO GET ALONG IS TO GO ALONG. REGIME IS ALSO HELPED BY THE FORTUITOUS INFLOW OF OIL REVENUES AND THE CURRENT EXPANSION OF ECONOMIC PROSPECTS FOR MOST CITIZENS.

5. MOST IMMEDIATE ACHILLES HEEL FOR REGIME IS INCREASING SHORTAGES OF FOOD ITEMS AND CONSUMER GOODS IN IRAQI SHOPS. REGIME HAS TAKEN CONSCIOUS DECISION TO RESTRAIN CONSUMPTION

AND USE BULK OF OIL REVENUES TO INVESTMENT, BUT GOVERNMENTAL  
INEFFICIENCY AND TRANSPORTATION BOTTLENECKS HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT  
SUPPLY SHORTAGES THAT PROBABLY GO CONSIDERABLY BEYOND REGIME'S  
INTENTION. IT IS NOT SAFE FOR IRAQIS TO CRITICIZE THEIR  
GOVERNMENT, BUT WE HAVE HEARD GRUMBLING OVER  
SHORTAGES OF EGGS, MILK, MEAT, CLOTHING, SPARE PARTS, AND EVEN  
BREAD. RESENTMENT IS COMPOUNDED BY FACT THAT BAATHI OFFICIALS  
ALWAYS SEEM TO BE MUCH BETTER SUPPLIED THAN REST OF  
POPULATION.  
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